

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 TRSE-00 EB-07 NEA-10 PA-01 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6267

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PORS, SHUM, MX

SUBJECT: TAX FRAUD AND GOM EFFORTS TO IMPROVE TAX COLLECTIONS

REFS: A) STATE 176487; B) MEXICO 8583; C) MEXICO 9039

1. EMBASSY ASSUMES REF A RELATES TO RECENT MAJOR SCANDAL
REPUTEDLY INVOLVING SOME 800 MILLION PESOS IN TAX EVASION BY
LEADING MEXICAN BUSINESSMEN -- SEE REFS B AND C. CONSIDERABLE
NUMBER OF THOSE IMPLICATED IN TAX FRAUD -- AT LEAST AMONG THOSE
WHOSE NAMES HAVE BEEN REVEALED -- ARE MEMBERS OF JEWISH
COMMUNITY IN MEXICO.

2. EMBOFF TOOK ADVANTAGE OF CALL ON HEAD OF JEWISH
COMMUNITY'S INFORMAL "POLITICAL" COMMITTEE, SERGIO
NEDELSTEJER, JULY 16 TO ASK WHETHER CRACKDOWN ON TAX EVADERS
SEEMED AIMED PARTICULARLY AT JEWISH COMMUNITY. HE RESPONDED
CATEGORICALLY THAT IT DID NOT, THAT THERE WAS UNFORTUNATELY
A DISPROPORTIONATE NUMBER OF JEWS IMPLICATED IN SCANDAL,
BUT THAT CRACKDOWN HAD INVOLVED THESE BECAUSE OF IRREGULAR
BUSINESS ACTIVITIES RATHER THAN THEIR ETHNIC IDENTITY.
NUDELSTEJER ADDED THAT, IN LIGHT OF CURRENT RENEWED
FRICTION BETWEEN MEXICO AND ISRAEL AT THE UN, AN ANTI-JEWISH
CAMPAIGN IN CONTEXT OF FRAUD SCANDAL WOULD HAVE EVEN
GREATER SIGNIFICANCE -- BUT AGAIN HE DISMISSED THIS

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POSSIBILITY.

3. NUDELSTEJER OBSERVED, INCIDENTALLY, THAT
TAX FRAUD SEEMED TO HAVE DISAPPEARED FROM
FRONT PAGES OF MEXICO CITY NEWSPAPERS, ALTHOUGH
INVESTIGATION CLEARLY HAD NOT COMPLETED ITS COURSE.
IT WAS HIS BELIEF THAT LIST OF TAX EVADERS WAS IN FACT
MUCH LONGER THAN NAMES PUBLISHED TO DATE AND MAGNITUDE OF
TAX EVASION FAR GREATER THAN REPORTED 800 MILLION PESOS.
HOWEVER, HE SAID, INVESTIGATIONS HAD REACHED INTO HIGH
PLACES WITHIN GOM AND TOUCHED AT LEAST ONE PERSON CLOSELY
RELATED TO SENIOR OFFICIAL OF THE PRESIDENCY. AS A
CONSEQUENCE, WORD HAD GONE OUT TO CALL OFF THE INVESTIGATION
AND LIMIT INDICTMENTS TO THOSE ALREADY NAMED.
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